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LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to the text of the communiqué of the sixth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), contained in the letter dated 17 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya (S/1998/247), I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the declaration of the seventeenth session of the Council of Ministers of IGAD, held in Djibouti on 15 March 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex

**DECLARATION OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS OF IGAD
ON THE CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN THE SUB-REGION
(DJIBOUTI, 15 MARCH 1998)**

SOMALIA

The Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Ato Seyoum Mesfin, briefed Council on the recent developments pertaining to the peace process in Somalia. Ethiopia as a mandated Country by the region and the OAU to seek a peaceful solution to the problem in Somalia appealed to IGAD Member States to work with greater resolve and determination to ensure that the IGAD peace initiative on Somalia, which is now in disarray, does not get derailed by proliferation of parallel initiatives.

The Ethiopian Foreign Minister underlined that in order to ensure the success in a new attempt to attain peace, lessons have to be drawn from the recent experience.

The proliferation of initiatives coupled with the lack of the necessary resolve on the part of the faction leaders is considered as the root cause of the challenges faced by the IGAD initiative for peace in Somalia. Lack of support by the International community for the peace process was also indicated as one of the problems faced.

The Council was briefed in detail on the status of the peace process in Somalia and agreed on the following

1. The key element for progress in the peace process in Somalia is for the IGAD countries to continue their effort with greater resolve and determination. The decision by the 3rd Session of the NSC on amendments to the Cairo Declaration provides the basis for salvaging the peace process on Somalia.

2. The Council has decided to broaden the peace process through greater participation by the Somali Civil Society for which the support of the international community would be critical
3. The international community is called upon to contribute politically, diplomatically and financially to the peace effort in general and specifically by directly assisting in the rehabilitation of those regions or areas of Somalia where faction leaders and their constituencies demonstrate practical commitment to peace, stability and national reconciliation.

In this regard, the United Nations and the Secretary-General are urged to take action as speedily as possible in setting up the Trust Fund in support of the peace process in Somalia ... an idea which had earlier been raised but on which practical action has not yet been taken. Accordingly, it was deemed necessary for the Current Chairman of IGAD to write to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the President of the Security Council urging both to assist in the realisation of this objective and asking for their practical support to stimulate and strengthen the renewed IGAD initiative.

The Council, in this connection requested the Current Chairman of IGAD H.E. President Daniel Arap Moi, to communicate with the EU Presidency and the Commission as well as the Presidency of the IGAD Partners Forum with a view to soliciting the active support of the European Union for the peace process in Somalia, more specifically by making it possible that funds allocated to Somalia from the Lomé Convention are released for use in the rehabilitation of those areas of Somalia in a way which is well calibrated to reinforce the peace process and to encourage the creation and the strengthening of constituencies for peace in that country.

4. The Council also agreed to look into the possibilities of creating a mechanism for consultation with all those who are prepared to contribute to the peace process in Somalia on the basis of the IGAD initiative and on condition that they refrain from engaging in

parallel initiatives and limit themselves to supporting IGAD's effort. Since the criteria for membership in the IGAD Partners' Forum is in the process of being drawn up, it might be possible in the meantime to look into the possibilities of including those who wish to contribute for peace in Somalia, and for that matter in other similar specific activities carried out by IGAD, in sub-committees established by the Joint IGAD Partners Forum. In this specific instance, it might be possible for those who are keen on contributing for peace in Somalia, to be part of IPF sub-committee on Somalia, as long as they are prepared to work through the IGAD peace initiative. This would allow all those who wish to contribute for the peace process to have their views heard without the need to embark on their own initiative which experience has shown is bound to do more harm than good.

5. The Council expressed its desire to call an international conference, under the auspices of IGAD, for maximising the support of the international community for the peace process. Such conference at which, apart from Somali faction leaders, Somali Civic groups, such as clan elders, representatives of women and youth group, Somali intellectuals, religious leaders and the Somali business community would participate could be made to come out with an Action Plan on ways and means of reinforcing the peace process and containing specific and implementable proposals for maximising the effective support of the international community for national reconciliation in Somalia.

SUDAN

The Sudanese delegation expressed its profound appreciation for the on going peace talks on the conflict in southern Sudan brokered by IGAD. The Council was also informed of the importance of transparency, impartiality and unity of purpose within IGAD as the basis for the success of the peace process. The delegation cautioned against the impact of negative external influences detrimental to the peace process in Southern Sudan.

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The Council notes with appreciation the understanding and patience of the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in Southern Sudan.

The Council encourages the parties to the conflict to work together towards a cease-fire so as to provide conducive environment for the next round of talks scheduled for April 1998 in Nairobi-Kenya.

The Council further reiterates its support for the Declaration of Principles (DOP) as the only basis for negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict as endorsed by both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A and reinforced by the shuttle diplomacy efforts of the Member States.
